REMARKS

The Examiner's Office Action of March 26, 2004 has been received and its contents reviewed. Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for the consideration given to the above-identified application.

By this Amendment, claims 1 and 3 have been amended and claim 5 has been added. The amendments to claims 1 and 3 have been made merely to clarify the features of the present invention. No new matter has been added by the foregoing amendment. Accordingly, claims 1-5 are pending for consideration, of which claims 1, 3 and 5 are independent. By the actions above and the remarks below, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of all the pending claims.

Referring now to the detailed Office Action, claims 1-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,513,007 to Ito et al. (hereinafter Ito). While only claim 1 is indicated as being rejected in paragraph 4, Applicants assume by the inclusion of paragraphs 6-8 under the 35 U.S.C. 102(b), that claims 2-4 are also rejected in the same manner. If this assumption is incorrect, Applicants request clarification in the next Office Action. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The Ito patent is directed to an image processing apparatus and method that identifies and converts a predetermined color in an input image into a predetermined density whereby the color in the original image can be identified in a monochromatic image by the density (Abstract).

In contrast, the printing method and apparatus of the present invention as described in independent claim 1 for example, is directed to converting a color image signal carrying color image information to a black-and-white image signal carrying black-and-white image information and obtaining a black-and-white printout, based on the converted black-and-white image signal carrying the black-and-white information. Additionally, at least either brightness level or saturation level of the color image information is independently changed for each hue level to be adjusted, to obtain the black and white image information. Ito does not disclose or suggest this combination of features.

For example, Ito does not disclose that at least at least either brightness level or saturation level of the color image information is independently changed for each hue level to be adjusted, to obtain the black and white image information, as recited in independent claim

1. In the Office Action, the Examiner indicates that "Ito et al. teaches of a brightness density conversion unit (110), in which the brightness signal is obtained based on the input image data of RGB (column 4, lines 4-7), which reads on at least either brightness or saturation is independently controlled for each desirable hue...". Applicants however submit that this does not in fact teach or suggest either brightness level or saturation level of the color image information is independently changed for each for each hue level to be adjusted, to obtain the black and white image information, as recited in independent claims 1 and 3.

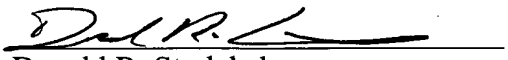
Instead, generation unit 110 of Ito obtains a brightness signal from the RGB signal by performing a calculation. At the same time, the RGB image data of Ito is supplied to a max/mid/min detection unit 120. Further, Ito employs a color discrimination unit (components 120-128) to detect the color component in the original image. The discrimination unit detects the hue corresponding to the order signal in the hue detection unit 123. Ito is able to convert a three dimensional color space signal to a two dimensional color space signal and is able to calculate a copy density value. When a predetermined color is detected, a density value is obtained.

Applicants respectfully submit that while the discrimination unit of Ito uses a hue to achieve an exact color discrimination, Applicants cannot find any disclosure where "at least either brightness level or saturation level of the color image information is independently changed for each hue level to be adjusted, to obtain the black and white image information" as variously recited in independent claims 1 and 3 of the present invention. Thus, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection or a more detailed explanation of the rejection in the next Office Action.

In view of the amendments and arguments set forth above, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of all the pending rejections.

While the present application is now believed to be in condition for allowance, should the Examiner find some issue to remain unresolved, or should any new issues arise which could be eliminated through discussions with Applicants' representative, then the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone in order that the further prosecution of this application can thereby be expedited.

Respectfully submitted,



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